

Aleph | The Blessing of God's Care for Us

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Date: 04 August 2022

[0 : 00] Right, go join me in Psalm chapter 119. I'm going to read the first eight verses for you. And I was going to preach the entire Psalm, but Jacob found out that half of you have already tired, so we won't be here for all of Psalm 119.

But this Thursday and next Thursday leading up to the 18th, when Awana starts, we should name this season, you know, where school started back, but Awana's a couple Thursday nights out.

But my prayer for our time in Psalm 119 is that all of you would leave with a greater love and appreciation for the blessing it is that we have the Word of God, that God made Himself noble to us and that He gave us the Word of God and preserved it for us.

I can speak about the fact that we have it in our own language, that you have your own copy, and that is wonderful. If you aren't driving here during the week to read the one copy that's available at the church, that you have it in so many different formats.

You have your Bible. And I know that you to be people that love the Word, but I pray that, especially in the next two Thursday nights as we look at parts of Psalm 119, and then we go into Thursday nights where we're going to talk about how you can understand the Bible.

[1 : 14] You should know that. This group should know that. But a lot of people don't know that. And we should help them know that they can learn the Bible, that a believer can understand the Bible, the Holy Spirit will help give them understanding, and God could use you to help them better understand it.

You're not only people that love the Bible, but you love everything about it. You love it from cover to cover. Some of you really love the covers, don't you? Some of you really like a nice Bible. I have a... This is my daily driver here, a Paul Leather Company one, all right?

I like this Bible. Brother Matt there, he has a green goat skin Bible. And I told him, I don't know what condition the goat was in, but I don't know that I would want to be handling that if the goat turns green before they make a Bible out of him.

But that goat is living its best life now, isn't it? It is now the Bible that Matt carries with them. And I know many of you just really like that. I like this size Bible.

I have a loose leaf Bible that I keep in my office. I really enjoy that, making copies of it. We're so blessed electronically, what you can read and have accessible to you. And we should just...

[2 : 19] We should be people that love the Bible. Greg had an idea this week. Big surprise, right? Yeah. Every seven seconds, Greg has a good... Has an idea. Well, that was a slip. Every seven seconds, he has an idea.

Every hour, he has a good idea, all right? He has a lot of good ideas. But he said, how about... This is a great idea. This is... I'm more than excited about this idea. Greg said, we're going to take...

Just ask people what they got out of the Bible and their reading, and just film it, and just put it out there on the internet for people to see it, so that they're not just seeing that the Word of God is taught from the pulpit, but the Word of God is being understood by everybody in the congregation.

I thought that was a great idea, because people don't need to think that this book isn't accessible to them. It is. It's wonderful. And I want us to appreciate that, and Psalm 119 helps us see that.

22 different portions of Scripture. You know, this is an alphabetic, acrostic. Almost all Bible prints are going to have above it the Hebrew letter, Eliph, A through...

[3 : 23] 1 through 8, the first letter, or the letter A, if you will, for Psalm 119, 1 through 8, we'll be looking at today. But it just has such an order to it.

Psalm 119 has such an order to it, such a beauty to it, and that resembles what we're learning about, is that our lives are blessed, and they have order as we follow God's instruction.

We see that especially in these first 8 verses. I'm going to read and pray. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart.

They also do not iniquity. They walk in His ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently. Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments.

I will praise Thee with the uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned Thy righteous judgments. I will keep Thy statutes. Oh, forsake me not utterly. Heavenly Father, in the hearts of the believers here tonight, would You help us grow a greater love and appreciation for the order in which the Word of God gives to our lives.

[4 : 36] Lord, may we rejoice in the blessed life that is available to us as we walk according to Your precepts. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. So as I said, there's an order.

The first eight verses here, we see that there's a blessing that's given as we live lives of obedience, keeping the commandments, and then towards the end of these eight verses, we see an anticipation where the writer says, based on what I know in the Word of God, I believe and I'm anticipating the fact that if I continue in this Word, that whatever is going to come my way, I will be prepared for.

So first off here, verse number one says, blessed are undefiled in the way who walk in the Lord. Verse two, blessed are they that keep His testimonies and that seek Him with His whole heart. Those who live in accordance to God's law are blessed.

We are blessed people to be able to live according to God's law, which means that we live in integrity. I was walking in the halls at school with Thatcher and I stopped to take a picture of a sign that said, and as soon as I did that, it says, this is coming into a sermon, isn't it?

I said, no, it's not. Didn't make it two days, all right? And the sign said, the best way to predict the future is to create it. And I told Thatcher, I said, this isn't going to really work into a sermon because that's not really a biblical truth, all right?

[5 : 56] The way that you can predict the future is by creating it. But then I thought about it and I found that it is, there are ways in which it is true. It is true in this fact that if I say that I want to live a blessed life, if I want to live a life that is successful according to God's word, that is a future that I can create.

I can decide that I am going to live in integrity. I can decide that I'm going to live according to the precepts of God's law. Joshua 1.8 tells us, the book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

For then thou shalt make the way prosperous, that thou shalt have good success. So good success, prosperity is defined of living according to God's word, meditating on it.

Are we preaching a prosperity gospel? Well sure, if you want us, if the prosperity is living out obedience to God's word, and that would be good success.

So the future we create for ourselves is one that we can say is blessed, it's one that we can say is prosperous, because it's one that says, I am committed that I'm going to live according to God's word, living in my integrity, as Psalm 7.8 would challenge us to do.

[7 : 14] And then we see here, walking in the way of the Lord as we live out the obedience, Psalm 1.2 says, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law does he meditate day and night.

This delighting is necessary if we are going to do the word of God. It's that struggle. It is that going into the word and meditating on it and saying, God, I take this as your word, and I'm going to live according to it.

Then in verse number two, it describes them as people that are keepers of testimonies. If you're a keeper of the testimonies of the Lord, then you will be blessed.

It says there's two, blessed are they that keep his testimonies. So what does it mean to keep his testimonies? It says in the second part of the verse, which is to seek him with all of your heart, that your whole heart means that you're completely occupied with the discernment of the Lord's will revealed in his word, that you're going to give your entire heart to doing what God would tell you to do.

And it says that they do no wrong. It doesn't mean that they are perfect people, but they are not given into the ways of following in another path, that I want to live according to this book, that it is going to dictate my life, that it is going to be the compass of my life, that whatever it says is true, regardless if I feel like it's true, even if I don't want it to be true, that I am going to meditate and find this.

[8 : 46] And so that should give us a great love for the truth and never run from it. Jesus has a story of Jesus of Matthew chapter number 21 that shows us of an example of somebody that was a group of people not seeking with their whole heart.

Quite comical. It says in verse number 23 of Matthew 21, And when he was coming to the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching and said, By what authority thou these things?

And who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will ask you one thing, which if you will tell me, I and likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

They wanted to know what power authority Jesus had. And he says, If you answer my question honestly, I will give you the answer to that question. But he knew they weren't seeking truth. They weren't seeking truth when they asked the question.

And he's going to reveal that to them by asking them a question. And he says this, The baptism of John, whence was it? Was it from heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves saying, If we say it's from heaven, then he'll say unto us, Then why didn't you believe him?

[9 : 55] Did you fear men? And why weren't you baptized by John? If you said that the baptism was from heaven, why didn't you repent and be baptized? And they answered Jesus and said, and then verse 26 it says, But if we shall say of men, we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet.

So they were listening, people were watching them, and if they would have said that John did not come from heaven, that John's message was not of God, and I should say that the message wasn't from heaven, then the people listening would judge them, because John was very in favor with those that were listening in that regard.

But they could not seek the truth, because they weren't willing to admit what was right in front of them. And this is what they said in verse 27, And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell.

And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. Jesus is teaching the principle here that we should know if we want to be people that seek after God's truth with all of our heart.

Everybody says amen to that. I mean, why would you not? I mean, why would you say no? I mean, I'd rip pages out of my Bible. Or no, I don't really believe the book of James. Or no, I don't believe in Galatians. Or I don't believe this.

[11 : 10] If somebody was to say that, you would say, Well, obviously you're not seeking God with all of your heart, wanting to know all truth that is available here in the Scripture.

Psalms 119, 160 says, Thy word is true from the beginning, and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever. Every part of God's word has been and will always be true.

Never outdated. Never need any modification. It's true. So how does a person get to a point where they do not continually seek the truth of God's word? Well, these people gave an example to us.

They weren't willing to accept the truth that was right in front of them because of their emotion of fear and because they wanted to please people more than they wanted to please the Lord.

How do you and I get to a place where we don't seek the truth anymore? What we do is we get to a truth in God's word that we don't want to admit that is true, either emotionally or because of the ramifications in our lives.

[12 : 09] And when we get to that place, then we stop seeking truth. Just like Jesus told in that story, He says, You want more wisdom? You want me to give you an answer to something else? Accept this to be true. If you'll be honest about this and accept this to be true, then I will give you more.

If you want to understand more of God's word, then you should consider what has already been revealed to you by God's word and what you're not accepting to be true. The next verses here, the emphasis shifts slightly.

Now, the psalmist is going to say that he determines to keep God's commandments. Verse 4, Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. All that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes, then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

So those who diligently keep his precepts will not be ashamed. Because it's written in poetic form and it's written in a way that often we don't speak, this isn't writing a poem where you're just like, I don't really care what it says as long as the words match, right?

You write poetry when you're in school and you've got to write a poem or a haiku. Do you remember those? Those don't make any sense. There's got to be so many verses of that. We are seeing raw emotion being expressed in a beautiful form.

[13 : 22] Holy Spirit's working through them. But do you hear that? Oh, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes. I'm not doing justice unto what is really being desired.

But I would just, I want to live according to your word. How many of you went back to school this week? Would you raise your hand? All right. All right, David did. That's good. Teachers and others, the students are too tired.

They raise their hand. And how many of you are glad that you didn't have to go back to school this week because you're an adult? All right. Kyle said some had both hands raised. Now, how many of you say, I'd rather go back to school and do what they do than go to work tomorrow?

All right. There's some hands there as well. It doesn't sound too bad to be told what to do hour by hour and all of that. I'm in front of you. Students, could I encourage you?

You have a decision to make. You have a syllabus given to you or an agenda. You have a class schedule. You have a book list. Above all of that, you need to say, oh, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.

[14 : 26] That God, I want to have a blessed school year. I want to have one that lives according to your word. That's what the psalmist cries out for, that he wants. And it will lead to not being ashamed.

Those who determine diligently live according to God's precepts will be safe and secure in the Lord. The point being stressed here is that God's laws are divine orders. This word precepts, this noun is used only in the Old Testament for in the book of Psalms.

It gives this idea that there's an overseer who is responsible to appoint and carry out the destiny of the people. It points, therefore, to God's instructions that give attention to detail in his care and development of his people.

Proverbs 12, 7, The wicked are overthrown and are not, but the house of the righteous shall stand. Those who live according to God's word have protection and safety because God cares for us.

These precepts are instructions because he is the master. He is our Lord over us. He knows what your school year is supposed to look like. He knows what your fall is supposed to look like.

[15 : 32] And we look to his precepts for guidance. You go on a trip somewhere. I don't know if it's your mom or your dad. Somebody said a marriage is one person's boring and one person's crazy and God puts them together to keep them, you know, so that they're together and some of you are looking at each other.

I don't know who would take the lead, but there's different places we would go and it's obviously Stephanie's in charge here and there's, I imagine there's some places in the world. No, I'm just kidding. There's some places in the world that I'm in charge.

Like my garage, I get to do whatever I want with that. I can mow. Sometimes I go vertical. Sometimes I do horizontal. That's totally, totally up to me, all right, what I want to do there. But you just go places and you know who's in charge and you know what's going to happen and they're going to tell you what is next.

We went to Disney World with the coffees and the co-fills of families some years ago and that was difficult because we all wanted to be in charge, right? And I knew as the son-in-law, brother-in-law, I was at the bottom of the totem pole.

Like I'd make a suggestion and they just like look like why are you even speaking? All right? You obviously don't get a say in any of this. But so when you go places, you have somebody that you know is in charge and they know what's best.

[16 : 47] You let them do that. We went back to Disney World and a lady that worked there that from one of the churches for our missionary, she worked there and she ran us ragged. She's like, you do this and you do this. She knew the place.

She knew what to go. Students, adults, everybody in here, your life is different than it is from one another. He has all wisdom in it. He knows exactly when to go right, exactly when to go left.

He knows when to stand up and when to sit down. He knows what needs to be done and we can trust him in every area of our lives. We can trust him when he says, go to Nigeria and wait.

We can trust him when he leads our heart. Just go have a conversation with a person. In the big ways, in the small ways, oh, I want God to direct my ways. Hope that's your prayer that you would say, God, I want you to direct my ways.

The psalmist expresses his desire to be faithful in God's and keeping God's commandment. Psalm 93, 1, the Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty, the Lord is clothed with strength wherewith he is girdeth himself.

[17 : 48] The world is also established that it cannot be moved. God is unmovable, he is steadfast, he knows, and he has given us his word.

He has written for us. He has written a book. All right? He has written a book. Just put it as plain as he can. So, you're not without direction. You're not without guidance in your life.

This binding nature of these statutes that are given here, this is how we are to conduct ourselves. These are commandments. These are precepts. These are statutes. These are something that we should just love.

We should just be grateful. If we knew that this word was missing any single precept that God would have us in our lives, then we ought to do whatever it takes to find it, right?

If somehow we knew that there was some missing part of it that wasn't available to us, what would we give to find it? Because it's God's wisdom for us. It's God's precept for us. Well, with that same appreciation that we would have for this thing that doesn't exist because we have what he has for godliness given to us, well, consider you have a book full of precepts to help lead and guide your life.

[19 : 00] And so we expect that the result of steadfast obedience would be deliverance. Psalm 31, verse 1 says, In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust. Never let me be ashamed. Deliver me in thy righteousness.

It seems that the psalmist is dealing with an issue here. Big surprise, right? The psalmist has plenty of issues. If you say, I'm always having issues, well, the book of Psalms is the book for me and for you.

They're always struggling with something. And so he's struggling with something and he says, as he's walking through it, he says he does not want to be ashamed. Saying, God, I want to live in a way that would bring honor to you.

That the direction of blamelessness and being unashamed has to do with God's view upon our lives. That God sees me. He sees me living in my integrity. And he says, God, as I walk through this season, as I walk through this challenge, I walk through something new that I've never been through.

God, I am going to follow your precepts believing that if I will allow you to dictate my life, I will come through this unashamed. I will come through this in a way that would be bringing honor to you.

[20 : 09] And so we show respect to the commandments and we shouldn't be driven by emotion. Oh, that my ways will be directed to keep thy statutes. What is the other option if it isn't being directed by statutes?

It's being directed just by emotion. It'd be directed by what somebody else would say about it. Going back to school, students, the Word of God speaks about many things and you're going to be put in the decision.

This is what my friends say. This is what somebody says. I'm going to let this, what they said, direct my life. Or you could say, as they said right here in verse 5, no, I want the Word of God to direct my life because in it is a blessed life.

In it is one that I know that I won't be ashamed of there. In God's Word you will find the constant that you need in your life. It's the steadfastness.

I was reading a devotional that a lady wrote and she was talking about Psalm 119 and she said that God really worked in her heart in Psalm 119 and she came back to it day after day for several months.

[21 : 15] Her life seemed like it was spinning out of control. There was nothing that was nailed down. Everything, nothing was steadfast. And she said this, I wondered if God's promises were true or if they would fail me as everything else in my life had.

That's a strong statement, isn't it? When you feel like everything's failing you, you feel like nothing in this world is just like nailed down. Everything's changing. I mean, Kroger ain't even the same when you go to it twice in a row, right?

They changed the aisles, all right? Nothing can be counted on. Nothing seems reliable. That's what you're believing. You can always go, but you can open up God's Word and it's going to remain the same.

It's going to give you teaching about a God who does not change. We'll look at verse 7 and 8 next week. That's one of the great things about having a weekly gig here, all right?

There's always more to come back for. But I want to end with this before I pray. In God's Word, we find that constant that we need in our lives. And so what I'm contrasting here is that if you don't make a decision and say, God, I want you to direct my heart and my life with your precepts and your Word.

[22 : 26] If you say, yeah, I want God to be in control of my life, I want to pursue God, but you don't allow the Word of God to determine your actions and thoughts, then it's just lip service, right? It's like, I want you to tell me what to do, but I'm not going to listen to you when you speak.

God, I want you to direct my life, but I don't want to hear from you. If you're not looking to the Word of God as the steadfast precepts that you need in life, then you're not listening to Him. Even when you feel like you need something to cling to.

Psalm 119, 25 says, My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy Word. When you feel like you can't get a hold of anything, and you're just hanging on to the dust of this world, everything else is gone, you can say, God, take me from where I'm at right now, and make me alive according to your Word.

So one practical step in that is you need to objectify your feelings and not identify with them, meaning that you need to recognize what is an emotion, and what is the Word of God.

What is something that you're feeling, and what is something that you know that you believe. And a great way to do that is to write them down. Write down, I feel like, and write all of that down, and look at it.

[23 : 38] And when you look at that, identify what's true, and what's just feeling. And when you write it down on a piece of paper, the great thing about it is you can walk away from that piece of paper. You can say, that is not me.

Those statements are not the Word of God. That is not who I really am. These words are who I really am. These are the thoughts that I want to have. This is what I want to direct my life, and these are things that I should not accept into my life.

Because it's so easy for them just to seem blended together. But you need to take your thoughts, and you need to look at them, and you need to say, is this a commandment? Is this a precept of God's Word?

And if it is, it remains. And if not, it gets written down, it gets tossed, it gets rejected out of your life. So knowing how the Word of God matters should help cast out fear and bring us hope.

Verse 25 of Psalm 119, I so cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy Word. When everything else fades away, his Word will last forever.

[24 : 41] Isn't that wonderful? And that you have that. When everything else seems to be changing, the Word of God will last. And we are blessed people to have it. We are blessed to have his precepts.

His yoke is not heavy. He knows how to live your life. And we should be going to it daily and saying, God, I want you to inform my decisions. I want you to give me the heart that I should have.

But that doesn't happen. God is not leading and guiding us if we're ignoring his Word. And so I pray we should be, we should hold our Bibles a little bit tighter when we read through Psalm 119 to say, how incredible it is that I have this.

That God has spoken into my life. That God is leading and guiding me. And what a blessed life it is that we get to live in his Word.